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NASIS

NEBRASKA ANNUAL SOCIAL INDICATORS SURVEY

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A LOOK AT NEBRASKAN'S FAVORITE OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

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The Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey

Helen A. Moore - 1982 Study Director

The findings in this report are based on data collected in the sixth Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey (NASIS). This survey is part of an on-going study of the quality of life in Nebraska conducted by the Bureau of Sociological Research at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The sample for NASIS consists of 1907 respondents eighteen years of age or older residing in households in Nebraska. The sample is selected through a process called random digit dialing: within each three-digit prefix in the state, four-digit numbers are selected randomly from all possible four-digit numbers to complete the telephone number. Respondents are further chosen randomly from the adults in the household and interviewed by telephone by experienced, professional interviewers from the offices of the Bureau of Sociological Research. All interviewing was done between February and April of 1982. This procedure produces a high-quality, representative sample of Nebraska adults. Analysis shows the sample to be representative of the state on age, sex, race, and geographical distribution.

The interview averaged approximately 47 minutes and included questions about energy use, health, recreation, political attitudes, occupation, education, family life, and other matters reflecting the quality of life experienced in the state. For the entire sample, the chances are 95 in 100 that the true value for the population lies within a range equal to the reported survey percentage plus or minus 2.24 percent. This is an estimate of maximum error and for most items the percentages are likely to be even more accurate.

The data gathered by NASIS are used by a wide variety of State and local government agencies for policy and program planning and by faculty and students at the University of Nebraska and other colleges for research. No information identifying any respondent is released to any user and the strict confidentiality of individual respondents is rigidly enforced. While the final responsibility for the organization and structure of the survey and for reports produced under its name rests with the Bureau of Sociological Research, public agencies and University departments play an integral part in planning the survey through an Advisory Committee. Public organizations interested in membership on the Advisory Committee should contact the NASIS Study Director.

Funding for NASIS comes from the University of Nebraska, the Bureau of Sociological Research and State and local agencies which buy items and data analysis from the survey.

The NASIS surveys are repeated each year to measure changes in the quality of life in Nebraska. While there is a core of questions which is included every year, each survey has a large component of unique items which address specific topical issues. Plans for future years include reinterviewing the 1977 panel every two years to assess changes in their lives. Additional detail on the NASIS surveys regarding use of the survey data or cost of purchasing items on future surveys can be obtained by contacting the NASIS Study Director at the Bureau of Sociological Research or by sending for a copy of the 1983 NASIS Prospectus.

A Look At Nebraskan's Favorite Outdoor Recreational Activities

Nebraskans, like other Americans fill their leisure time by engaging in a wide variety of activities. These may range from watching television and playing video games to participating in a summer softball league and jogging. Whatever the activity, having the time, opportunity, and resources to engage in pursuits that are found enjoyable contribute in a significant way to the definition of a high quality of life in American society. One important category of leisure is participation in outdoor recreation. While outdoor activities may not occupy as much of the non-working time of Nebraskans as leisure activities that may occur in the home, the ability to get outside and enjoy the fresh air, scenic beauty, and recreational opportunities provided outdoors is central to the "good life" enjoyed by Nebraskans.

How many Nebraskans consider themselves active outdoor persons, and what are their favorite outdoor recreational activities? The 1982 Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey included items that allow us to answer these questions and compare Nebraskans in different social groups and walks of life.

As one might expect, variety abounds in the types of activities which Nebraskans name as their favorite. Many Nebraskans enjoy more traditional outdoor activities, such as hunting and swimming, while some others find more unusual activities to be their favorites, such as hanging clothes on the line and mountain climbing. Although the types of outdoor recreation the respondents enjoy during their leisure time are many and varied, one thing is obvious; Nebraskans are active outdoor people who seek out and enjoy all that Nebraska has to offer in ways of scenic beauty and recreational opportunities.

Findings

One indicator that Nebraskans are oriented to the outdoors are the responses given to the question, "Do you consider yourself an active outdoor person?". When this question was asked of a random sample of Nebraskans in 1982, 70 percent responded affirmatively--only 30 percent did not consider themselves active in the outdoors.

Whether or not they did consider themselves active outdoor persons, respondents to the survey were asked to name their three favorite outdoor recreation activities. Not all respondents were able to name three things they liked to do outdoors. As one might expect, those Nebraskans who did consider themselves active in the outdoors were much more likely to name three activities than those who did not. Differences also existed between different types of respondents. Men were somewhat more likely than women to be able to name three activities, perhaps due to the view of the outdoors as a traditional male domain. Not surprisingly, younger people (age 18-29) were three times as likely to name 3 outdoor recreation activities than those in the oldest age group (age 55 and over). Older people may at times have difficulty participating due to the energy requirements of some outdoor activities. Also of interest is that the best educated respondents reported three activities more frequently than those in the lower educational categories. However, there was little difference between urban and rural residents and among the residents of different regions of the state in the number naming three favorite activities.

Information on the favorite outdoor activities reported by the respondents to the survey are given in Tables 1 and 2. The outdoor activities are listed in order of their popularity in the state. The ones most mentioned are listed first, the second most mentioned second, down through the 15 most mentioned activities. Walking and hiking was the activity most

frequently mentioned as a favorite of Nebraskans, followed by gardening, fishing and so on down the list. While these fifteen categories do not encompass all the outdoor activities mentioned (there were over 50 categories of these), over 90 percent of the favorites mentioned by respondents wee in these fifteen categories of outdoor recreation.

Comparison of Favorite Activities by Groups

Outdoor recreation activities are not equally accessible to all. Some activities require more physical strength and endurance and thus are not as desirable to some people, such as older Nebraskans. Also, some activities require proximity to resources, such as a pool or a lake, or membership in a country club or YMCA. In order to assess differences in preference patterns of groups of Nebraskans, we examine the favorite activities separately by sex, education, age, community size and region of residence of the respondents. The number in the column represents a ranking based on the number of respondents who gave that activity as a favorite outdoor recreation activity. Therefore, a "1" next to an activity means it was the most frequently mentioned activity for that group. The number in parentheses is the percent of Nebraskans with the characteristic (e.g., males) indicating the activity was one of their three favorites. Only the top ten ranked activities are given for each group.

Sex

Men and women tend to name different activities as their favorite. For example, for men, fishing was the most often named recreation activity with 38.4 percent of the men naming fishing as one of their favorites. Hunting and trapping was the second most mentioned, followed by team sports. In contrast, women named walking and hiking as their favorite outdoor

recreation activity with 44.2 percent of the women doing so. Walking and hiking was followed by gardening and swimming. Although the majority of the activities were ranked in the top ten by both men and women, there are some differences. Bicycling and tennis were found among the top ten for women, but not men, while hunting and trapping was ranked high for the men, but was not in the women's top ten favorites. It appears that Nebraska men tend to list as their favorites traditional male outdoor recreational activities such as hunting and fishing, activities seldom mentioned by women. However, while some sex specific activities are included among those most often mentioned by women, the activities at the top of their list are also popular among men.

Age

The younger age group, those 18 to 29 years old, show a greater preference for outdoor activities that require physical exertion than is true for the other age groups. Their most often named favorite activity was team sports, followed by swimming and walking. The rank order of preferred activities of the 30 to 54 years-old-age group are similar to the younger Nebraskans in the sample, but this group named walking and hiking as the most favorite activity followed by fishing and team sports. Also, while gardening is the fourth mentioned activity for the middle aged group, it is not even in the top ten of the younger age group. Those in the oldest age group prefer more sedentary outdoor activities such as walking and hiking, gardening and yard work. Those activities which require much energy such as team sports and water activities are not among their ten favorites.

Education

The amount of schooling does not appear to have much influence on one's choice of outdoor recreation activities. The three educational categories have similar patterns in the ranking of favorite activities. Walking, gardening, fishing and team sports are popular choices among all three groups. Some small differences do occur which are worth mentioning. Respondents with less than 11 years of education list horseback riding among their top ten favorites, while those with 13 or more years of schooling include golf and tennis in theirs. Overall, however, level of education does not affect one's choice of outdoor recreation activities to any large extent.

Community Size

We might expect that the size of the community in which a person lives would have some effect on the variety of favorite outdoor activities, in part reflecting differential access to recreational resources and the availability of leisure time. For example, we might anticipate that individuals who reside on a farm would pursue recreational activities that are related to farming or can be easily pursued in a small group. Individuals who reside in a town or city, on the other hand, might participate in outdoor recreational activities that require more sophisticated facilities and can be done in larger groups, such as summer softball leagues. Nebraska residents appear to engage in similar outdoor recreational activities regardless of community size although some differences are found. Walking and hiking, gardening and fishing were popular activities in both rural and urban areas. People residing on a farm ranked horseback riding in their top ten favorite activities. While golfing was a popular activity for those who lived in the open country, the town and city folks found bicycling more to their liking. Community size, then,

appears to be significant only in a few cases where specific resources are needed to engage in an activity.

Region

Nebraska is a state with great regional variety, ranging from the highly urbanized and industrialized Omaha Metropolitan Area to the primarily rural-farm sparsely populated regions in the Panhandle and north. The outdoor recreational activities listed as favorites differ by region of the state. Walking and hiking, gardening and fishing are popular in every region of the state. These are activities which can be enjoyed anywhere in Nebraska. Some activities were ranked very high in some regions and were not mentioned in the top ten favorite activites in others. Team sports is a favorite outdoor recreational activity in five out of the six regions with the exception being the Panhandle. Those in the Panhandle prefer horseback riding as do those residing in the Southwest. Respondents in the South Central area do not name water activities as their top ten favorite activities and those in the Omaha area do not list hunting and trapping as one of their top ten favorites. Finally, although those in the North name activities in common with the other regions they do have a top ten preference for golf, which was not ranked in the top ten in any of the other regions.

Summary

Outdoor recreational activities appear to be a popular use of leisure time for Nebraskans. In general, residents of Nebraska consider themselves to be active outdoor persons and participate in a wide variety of outdoor recreational pursuits. Although diversity does exist in outdoor recreational participation, similarity is the key to viewing the favorite

activities of Nebraskans. Walking and hiking, gardening and fishing are given as favorite outdoor recreation activities for every group of respondents examined. These are activities which can be pursued almost anywhere in the state and provide an ample supply of enjoyment for the participants. Sex and age are the most important determinants of differential outdoor recreation participation, while education, community size and region have lesser effects on choice of favorite outdoor activity.

Table 1.

Ranking* of Favorite Outdoor Recreation Activities of Nebraskans for Total Sample and by Sex, Age and Educational Groups, 1982.

	Total	Sex		Age			Education		
		Males	Females	18-29	30-54	55-96	0-11	12	15+
Walking/ Hiking	35.2	4 (22.4)	1 (44.2)	3 (25.1)	1 (34.8)	1 (44.2)	2 (30.4)	1 (33.3)	1 (39.1)
Gardening	23.5	9 (12.2)	2 (31.6)		4 (19.5)	2 (40.8)	1 (38.1)	4 (21.2)	3 (19.7)
Fishing	22.9	1 (38.4)	7 (11.9)	4 (19.9)	2 (28.3)	4 (18.4)	3 (23.8)	2 (25.1)	2 (20.5)
Team Sports	19.3	3 (26.5)	5 (14.3)	1 (36.7)	3 (21.3)		5 (14.3)	3 (22.2)	4.5 (18.7)
Swimming	18.0	8 (13.0)	3 (21.5)	2 (33.1)	5 (18.3)	7 (4.8)	6 (10.7)	5 (20.4)	
Yard Work	14.1	10 (12.0)	4 (15.7)		9 (12.5)	3 (23.8)	4 (17.3)	6 (15.5)	
Water Activities	13.1	5 (15.3)	8 (11.6)	5 (18.3)	6 (18.0)		9 (4.8)	8 (13.2)	6 (16.6)
Hunting and Trapping	13.0	2 (29.8)		10 (13.9)	7 (16.5)	5 (17.5)	7 (10.1)	7 (13.7)	8 (13.6)
Camping/ Backpacking	11.3	6 (14.8)	10 (8.8)	7 (16.3)	8 (13.3)	8 (4.4)	8 (8.9)	10 (10.3)	9 (13.3)
Bicycling	9.4		6 (12.6)	9 (14.7)		9 (2.4)		9 (10.9)	
Tennis	9.3		9 (10.6)	6 (17.5)					10 (13.0)
Golf	8.7	7 (13.7)			10 (12.5)	6 (5.8)			7 (14.6)
Jogging/ Running	8.2			8 (15.9)					
Horseback Riding	5.8						10 (4.2)		
Picnic/ Cook-Out	2.5					10 (2.4)			
Number of Cases		393	554	251	399	294	168	387	391

*Numbers in parentheses are percentage of respondents mentioning activity as a favorite.

Table 2.

Ranking* of Favorite Outdoor Recreation Activities of Nebraskans by Community Size and Region, 1982.

	Community Size			Region					
	Farm	Open Country	Town or City	Pan-handle	South West	South Central	North	Omaha Area	South East
Walking/ Hiking	3 (25.6)	4.5 (22.2)	1 (37.9)	1 (45.2)	2 (31.8)	2 (26.7)	1.5 (34.0)	1 (38.1)	1 (35.3)
Gardening	1 (34.6)	2 (25.4)	2 (21.3)	3 (22.6)	1 (34.1)	1 (28.1)	1.5 (34.0)	7 (13.4)	2 (25.3)
Fishing	2 (29.3)	1 (30.2)	3 (21.2)	2 (29.0)	3 (25.0)	3 (24.4)	3 (25.7)	4 (19.2)	3 (23.2)
Team Sports	7 (12.8)	3 (23.8)	4 (20.1)		7 (12.5)	4 (20.0)	4 (20.1)	3 (23.2)	4 (18.9)
Swimming	9 (9.0)	6 (17.5)	5 (19.6)	6 (14.5)	5.5 (15.9)	9 (11.9)	6 (13.9)	2 (25.0)	5 (15.3)
Yard Work	6 (15.0)	7 (15.9)	6 (13.9)	4 (21.0)	5.5 (15.9)	5 (18.5)	9.5 (8.3)	8.5 (13.1)	6 (14.2)
Water Activities	5 (17.3)	4.5 (22.2)	8 (11.6)	7 (11.3)	4 (18.2)		8 (13.2)	8.5 (13.1)	10 (12.6)
Hunting and Trapping	4 (24.1)	8.5 (14.3)	9 (10.9)	5 (17.7)	7 (15.9)	6 (16.3)	5 (18.6)		7.5 (13.2)
Camping/ Backpacking			7 (12.3)		11 (8.0)	9 (11.9)	9.5 (8.3)	6 (13.7)	9 (12.6)
Bicycling			10 (10.7)	8 (9.7)	11 (8.0)	7 (14.1)			7.5 (13.2)
Tennis				9 (9.7)		9 (11.9)		5 (14.0)	
Golf		8.5 (14.3)					7 (13.9)		
Jogging/ Running	10 (7.5)	10 (12.7)			11 (8.0)			10 (10.4)	
Horseback Riding	8 (9.8)			10 (8.1)	9 (9.1)				
Picnic/ Cook-out									
Number of Cases	133	63	750	62	88	135	144	328	190

*Numbers in parentheses are percentage of respondents mentioning activity as a favorite.

List of reports already released using data gathered in the 1982 Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey. These may be purchased at the indicated price from the Bureau of Sociological Research at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Report Number	Title
1.	Designs, Procedures, Instruments and Forms for the 1982 NASIS. Helen A. Moore. Price: $7.50.
2.	Attitudes Toward Social Security. Warren Luckner. Price: $1.25.
3.	Community Colleges and Higher Education. Helen A. Moore. Price: $1.00.
4.	The Status of Older Nebraskans. Jane C. Ollenburger and the Bureau of Sociological Research. Price: $1.50.
5.	Social Responses to Scarcity. Alan Booth. Price: $1.00.